

Portland State University

PDXScholar

Sociology Faculty Publications and
Presentations

Sociology

4-6-2017

Building Diversity in the Construction Trades

Maura Kelly

Portland State University, maura.kelly@pdx.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/soc_fac



Part of the [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), and the [Work, Economy and Organizations Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Citation Details

Kelly, Maura, "Building Diversity in the Construction Trades" (2017). *Sociology Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 64.

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/soc_fac/64

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sociology Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

Building Diversity in the Construction Trades

Maura Kelly, PhD
Department of Sociology
Portland State University

Diversity in the
>> Construction Trades Summit



THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2017

This presentation is available at www.pdx.edu/sociology/maura-kelly

Workforce Diversity in the Construction Trades

- What are the trends in recruitment and retention, particularly for women and people of color, in the construction trades in Washington and Oregon?
- What challenges do tradespeople, particularly women and people of color, experience in Washington and Oregon?
- What policies and programs for increasing diversity in the construction workforce have been utilized in Washington and Oregon?
- Why should stakeholders support increasing diversity in the construction workforce and promote respectful workplaces?

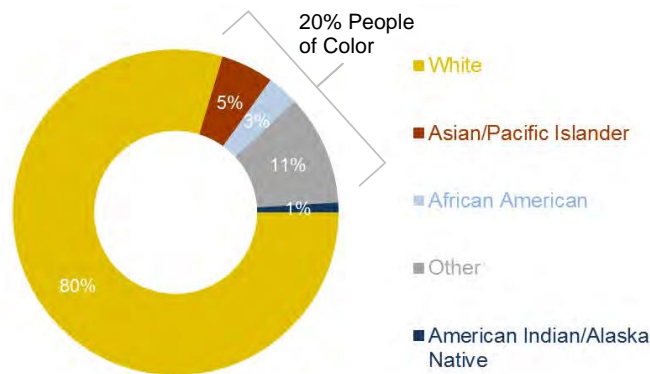
Workforce Diversity in the Construction Trades

- What are the trends in recruitment and retention, particularly for women and people of color, in the construction trades in Washington and Oregon?
- What challenges do tradespeople, particularly women and people of color, experience in Washington and Oregon?
- What policies and programs for increasing diversity in the construction workforce have been utilized in Washington and Oregon?
- Why should stakeholders support increasing diversity in the construction workforce and promote respectful workplaces?

Washington Construction Workforce, by Race and Gender (2012)

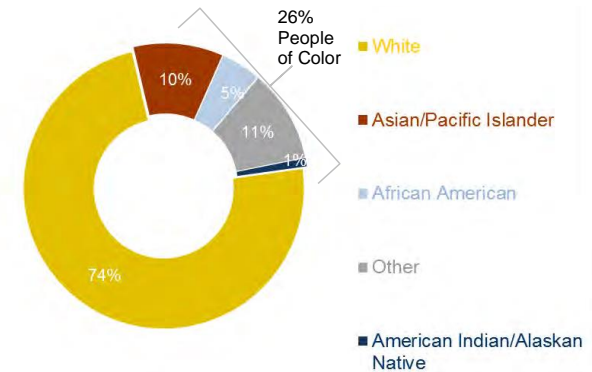
Construction workforce in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties:

- People of color 20%
- Women 4%



Construction workforce in Seattle:

- People of color 26%



Source: US Census Bureau EEO Tabulation 2006-2010 by Workplace Geography, 2013, Community Attributes, 2014. 'Other' includes Hispanic, Pacific Islander, More than one Race, and all others not listed.

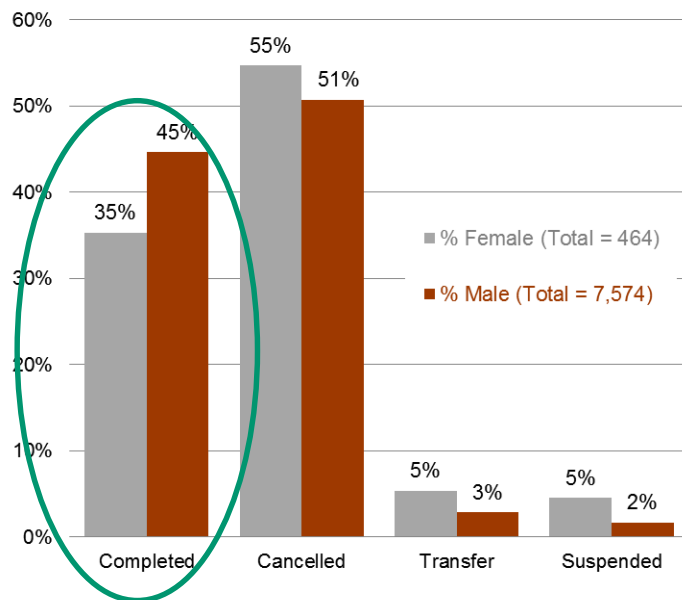
Sources: US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2013; Puget Sound Regional Council, 2014; Community Attributes, 2014. 'Other' includes Hispanic, Pacific Islander, More than one Race, and all others not listed.

Recruitment and Retention in the Construction Workforce in Washington's King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, by Gender and Race (2009-2013)

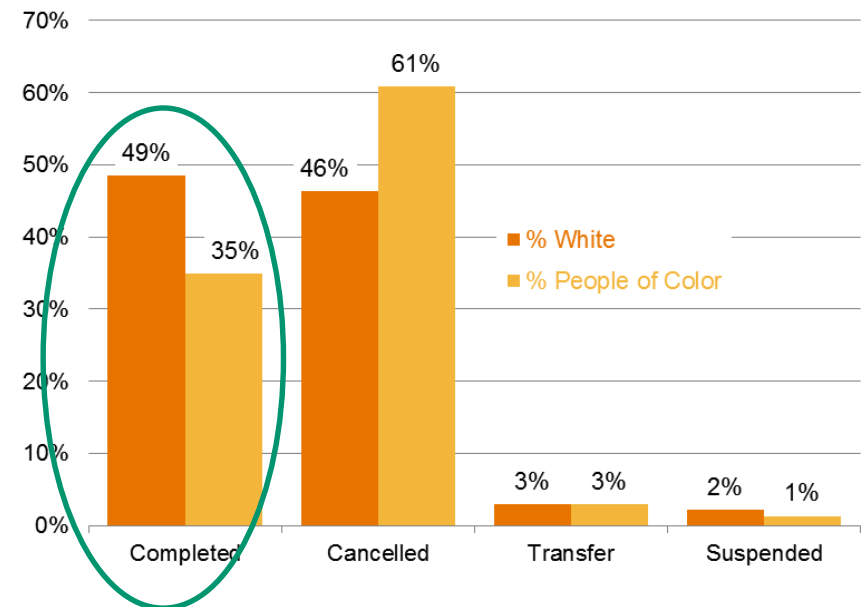
Recruitment

- Women make up 6% of apprentices

Retention



Source: Washington Department of Labor and Industries, 2013; Community Attributes, 2014.



Source: Washington Department of Labor and Industries, 2013; Community Attributes, 2014.

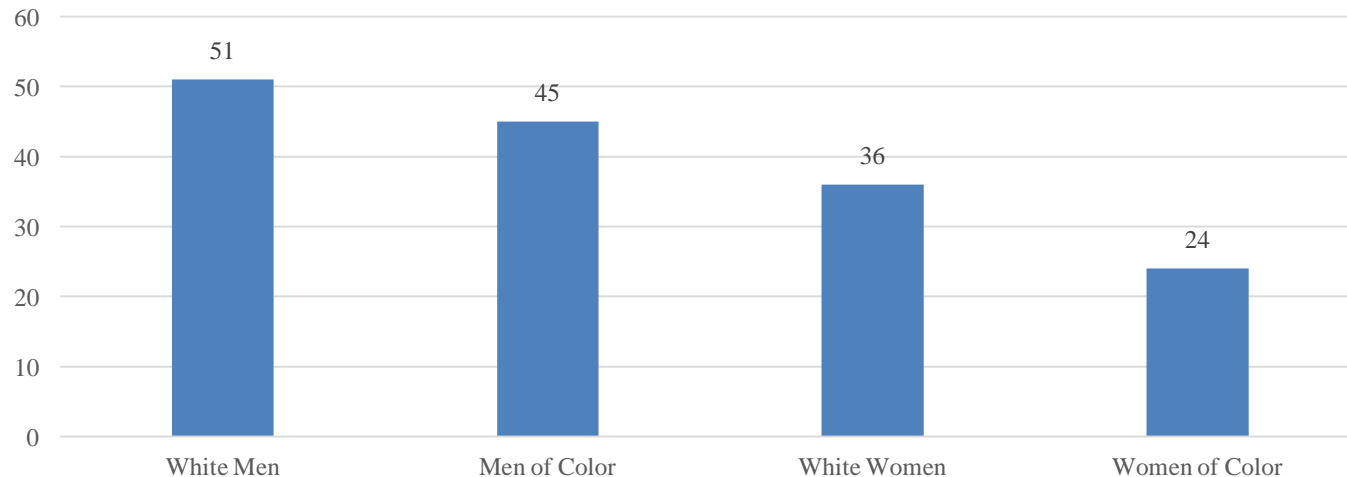
Source: Community Attributes. 2014. *City of Seattle Construction Industry Labor Market Assessment*. Available at: https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/FAS/PurchasingAndContracting/Labor/CAI_Study2014.pdf

Recruitment and Retention in the Construction Workforce in Oregon, by Gender and Race (2015)

Recruitment

- White men make up 70% of new apprentices
- Men of color make up 22% of new apprentices
- White women make up 6% of new apprentices
- Women of color make up 2% of new apprentices

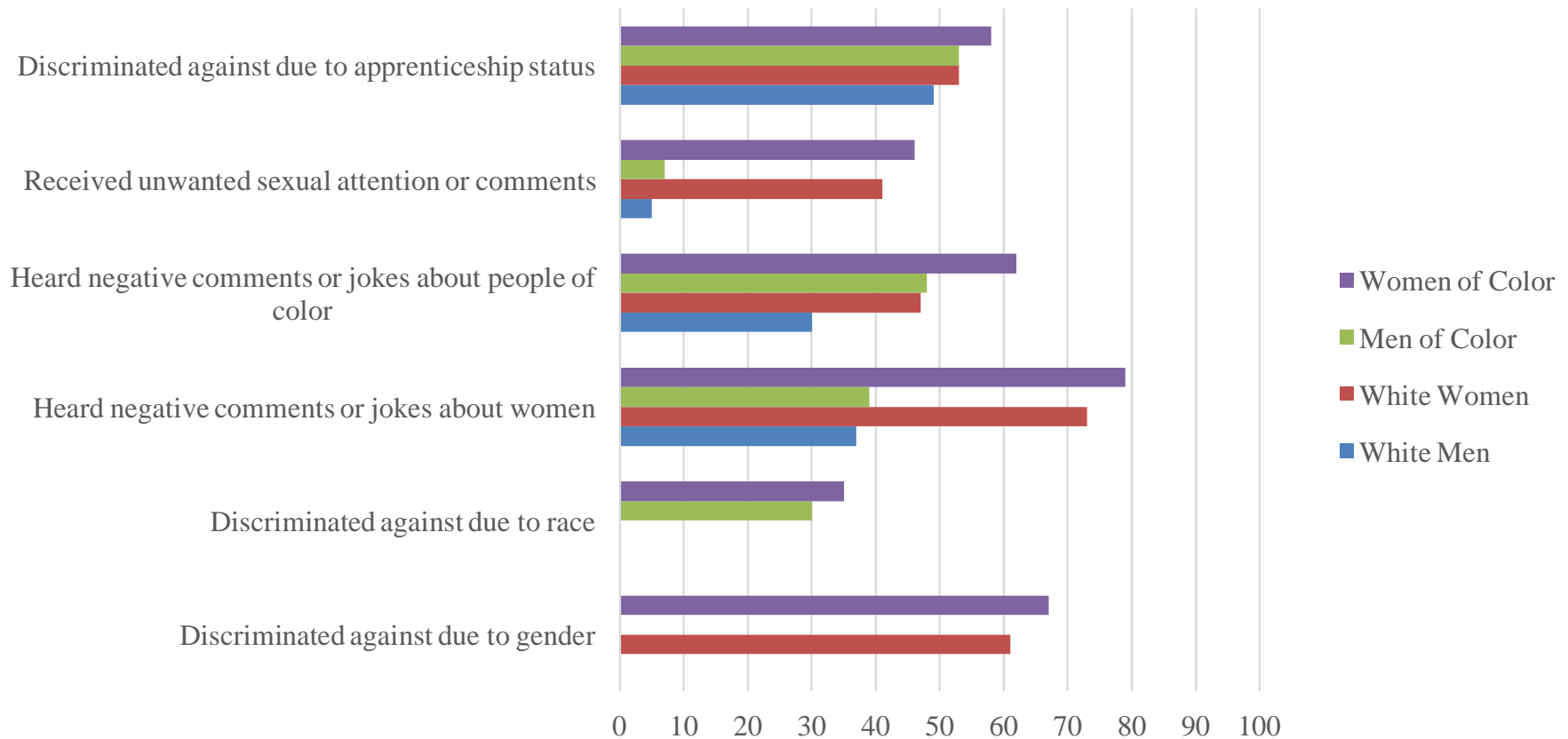
Retention



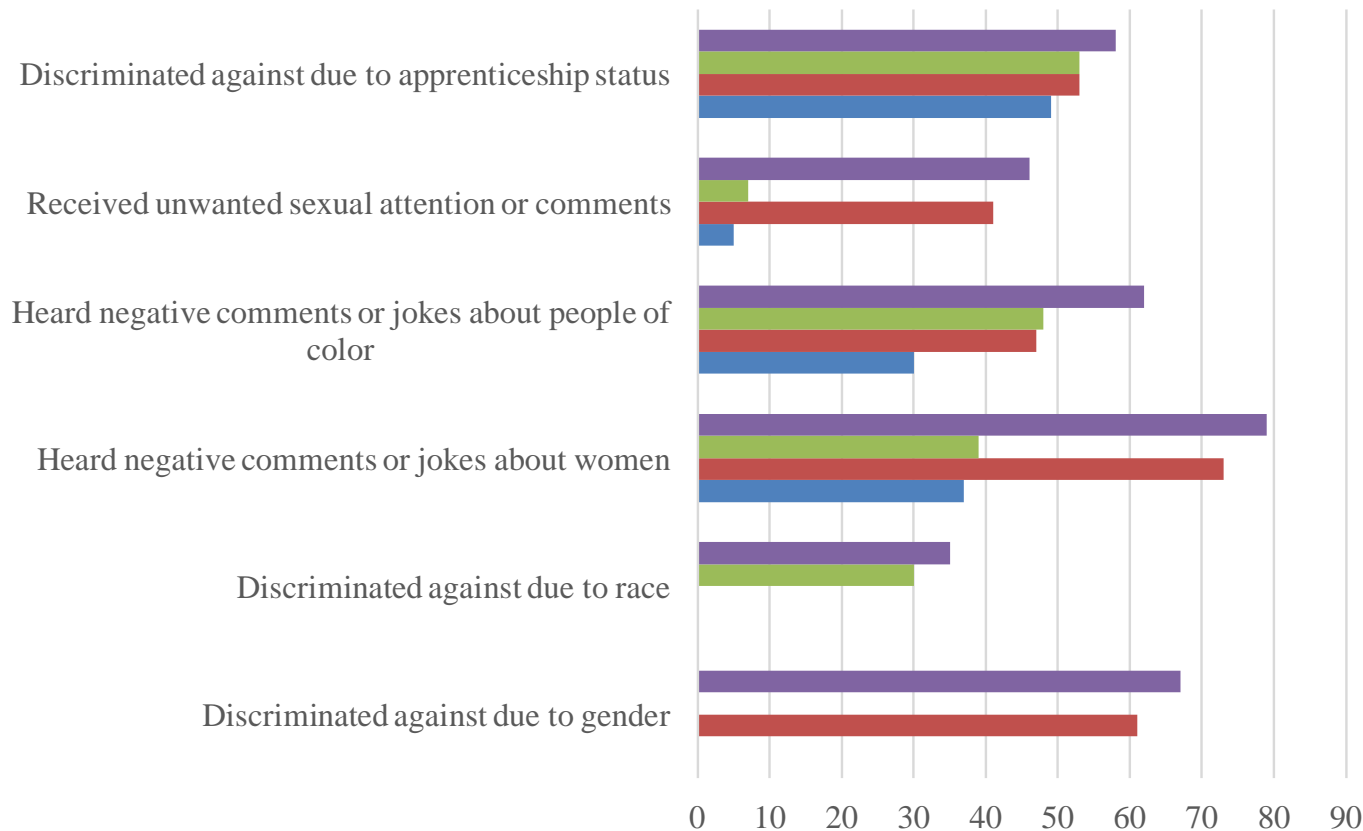
Workforce Diversity in the Construction Trades

- What are the trends in recruitment and retention, particularly for women and people of color, in the construction trades in Washington and Oregon?
- What challenges do tradespeople, particularly women and people of color, experience in Washington and Oregon?
- What policies and programs for increasing diversity in the construction workforce have been utilized in Washington and Oregon?
- Why should stakeholders support increasing diversity in the construction workforce and promote respectful workplaces?

Percentage of Oregon Apprentices Witnessing or Experiencing Harassment and Discrimination, by Race and Gender (2014-2015)



Percentage of Oregon Apprentices Witnessing or Experiencing Harassment and Discrimination, by Race and Gender (2014-2015)



In a survey of tradespeople in Washington, researchers found that “Forty percent of women felt discriminated against at work because of their gender.” (Curtis and Seixas 2016:13)

Experiences of Aggression

“People would say **‘you are the wrong color to be in this training.’**” (Latino apprentice in Oregon)

“**They say women should not be in the trades**, not fit for the job, and we cannot do what men can do. They have asked me if I have ever been a stripper, or if I am there just to find a husband. ” (white female apprentice in Oregon)

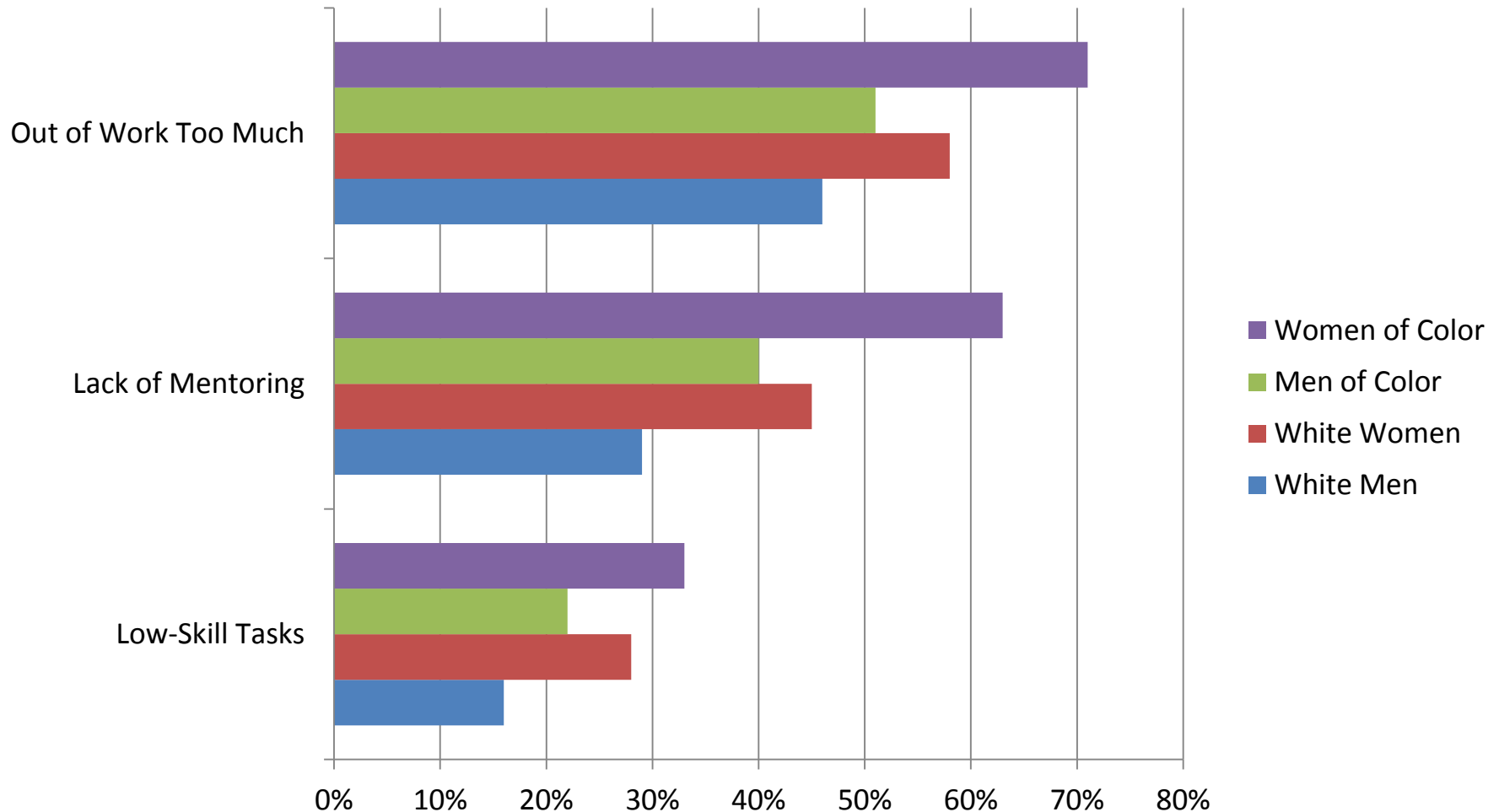
“Men don't want us there so **it is a constant, unstated hostile environment.**” (Journeywoman electrician in Washington)

“[I experienced] being **bullied a lot**, treated like you were a nobody, a low person, an amoeba. (white male apprentice in Oregon)

Curtis, Hannah and Noah Seixas, PhD. 2016. “Addressing the Health and Safety Needs of Washington Women in the Trades” Available at http://deohs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/SHEWT_Phase_I_Final_Report.pdf

Wilkinson, Lindsey and Maura Kelly. 2016. (Still) Building A More Diverse Workforce in the Highway Trades: 2016 Evaluation of the ODOT/BOLI Highway Construction Workforce Development Program. Available at: <http://www.pdx.edu/sociology/maura-kelly>

Apprentices Reporting Challenge as a Major or Minor Problem in Oregon, By Gender and Race (2014-2015)



Experiences of Discrimination

“They will take the first opportunity available to replace you”
(Journeywoman electrician in Washington)

“Not being able to get certain jobs, and they bragged about it and laughed about it like it was a funny thing that was happening.”
(African American male apprentice in Oregon)

“I was always the first one to get sent home while the guys would get all the long hours.” (African American female apprentice in Oregon)

“[I was] not being assigned skilled tasks. And when given the skilled tasks, not being shown how to properly do it. Often left to work alone.” (African American male apprentice in Oregon)

Curtis, Hannah and Noah Seixas, PhD. 2016. “Addressing the Health and Safety Needs of Washington Women in the Trades” Available at http://deohs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/SHEWT_Phase_I_Final_Report.pdf

Wilkinson, Lindsey and Maura Kelly. 2016. (Still) Building A More Diverse Workforce in the Highway Trades: 2016 Evaluation of the ODOT/BOLI Highway Construction Workforce Development Program. Available at: <http://www.pdx.edu/sociology/maura-kelly> c

Workforce Diversity in the Construction Trades

- What are the trends in recruitment and retention, particularly for women and people of color, in the construction trades in Washington and Oregon?
- What challenges do tradespeople, particularly women and people of color, experience in Washington and Oregon?
- What policies and programs for increasing diversity in the construction workforce have been utilized in Washington and Oregon?
- Why should stakeholders support increasing diversity in the construction workforce and promote respectful workplaces?

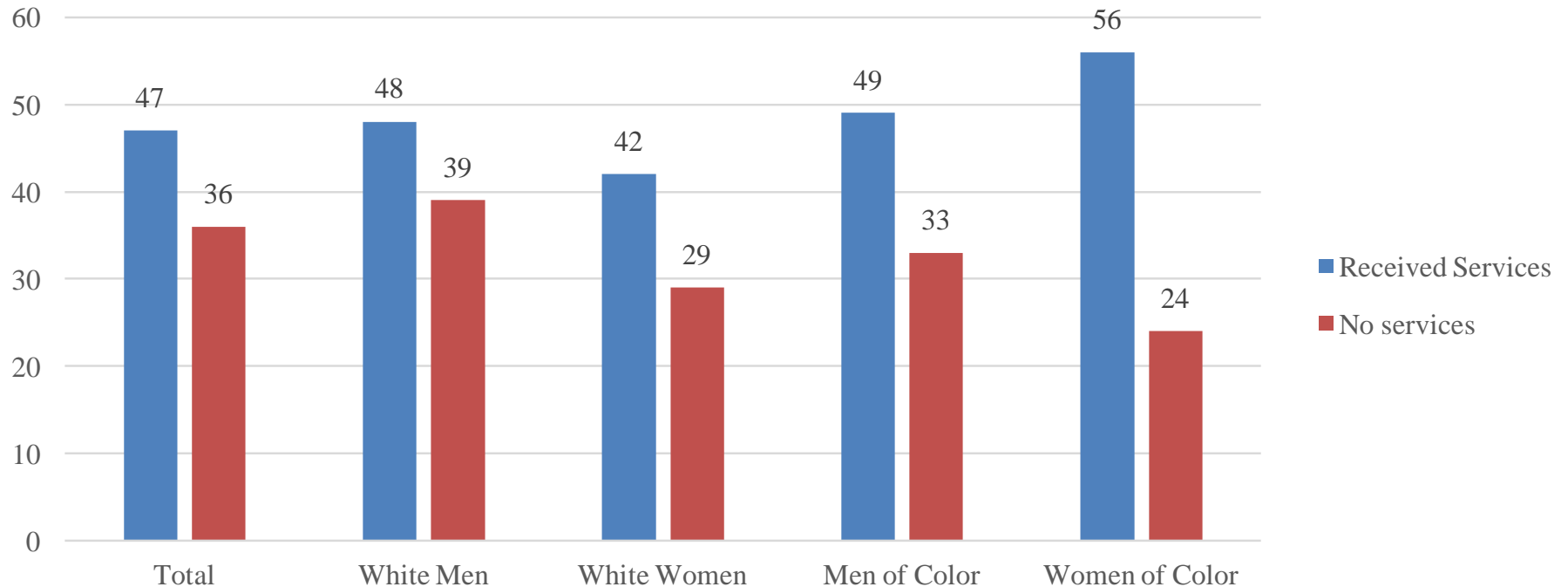
Approach	Washington Examples	Oregon Examples
Support for pre-apprenticeship programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oregon Tradeswomen Inc Constructing Hope
Financial and non-financial support for apprentices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention services through trades organizations (e.g. ANEW, contractors, unions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention services through trades organizations (i.e. Oregon Tradeswomen, Constructing Hope, contractors, unions) Oregon Workforce Development Program
Promoting hiring of marginalized workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seattle Community Workforce Agreements (CWA) with goals to include workers from the community, women, people of color and apprentices (e.g. Elliott Bay Seawall Project) Seattle priority hire policy with goals to include local, female, and racial/ethnic minority workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) with goals to include female and racial/ethnic apprentice and journey-level workers (e.g. Kelly Butte Reservoir) Multnomah County Workforce Training and Hiring Program with goals to include female and racial/ethnic minority workers (e.g. Sellwood Bridge)
Promoting respectful workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Dot Bystander Intervention Program for the Construction Trades in Seattle RISE Up in Washington (ANEW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Dot Bystander Intervention Program for the Construction Trades in Oregon

The Oregon BOLI/ODOT Highway Construction Workforce Development Program

Program goal: To improve stability and diversity of the highway construction workforce by promoting recruitment and retention of apprentices. Elements of the program include include pre-apprenticeship, supportive services, respectful workplaces, and evaluation research.

Supportive services include financial and non-financial support to help apprentices stay employed: **Fuel assistance** for travel to and from job sites and required classes; **lodging and per diem** for jobs that are more than 60 miles from home; **job readiness supplies** (work tools, work clothing, personal protective equipment); **child care** subsidies; **non-financial support services** (counseling, formal mentoring)

Completion Rates Among Apprentices in Eligible Trades, by Receipt of BOLI/ODOT Supportive Services, by Race and Gender (2005-2015)



Adaptation of Bystander Approaches for the Construction Trades

The adaptation of bystander approaches for the construction trades involves training individuals to intervene when they see aggression on jobs sites.

- In Oregon and Seattle, an adaptation of the Green Dot bystander intervention approach will be implemented on pilot job sites.
- In Washington, ANEW is piloting the RISE Up (Respect, Inclusion, Safety, Equity) approach, a customizable approach to reviewing policies and processes on aggression as well as developing trainings on respectful workplaces and bystander intervention.



Bystander Approach: Strengths

- A clear goal: to reduce aggression on construction job sites.
- A straightforward strategy: When a person is a bystander to aggression, they should intervene by a) **directly intervening** with the aggressor or with target of aggression; b) **delegating** to someone else; or c) **distracting** from the situation.
- An approach that has had demonstrated success in other contexts (e.g. colleges, military).
- A focus on how aggression affects everyone.
- Acknowledges that people in positions of power have the most opportunity to intervene; marginalized workers have the most barriers to intervening.

Bystander Approach: Strengths

- Acknowledges barriers to formal reporting.
“I think [apprentices don’t formally report aggression because] **they’re afraid they’re going to lose their job** for the most part. Either that or **they are afraid that then they’ll be the target.**”
(Female apprentice program staff member in Oregon)
- Builds on bystander intervention and informal reporting practices that are already occurring.
“Normally when people aren’t being treated right or something is going astray, **you have good guys working around you. They just fix it themselves.** Nothing is reported. The super doesn’t know.” (white tradeswoman in Oregon)

Bystander Approach: Challenges

- Integrating the bystander “bottom up” approach with a “top down” approach informed by company policies and practices.
- Identifying partner contractors willing to adopt the program.
- Support from all levels of management.

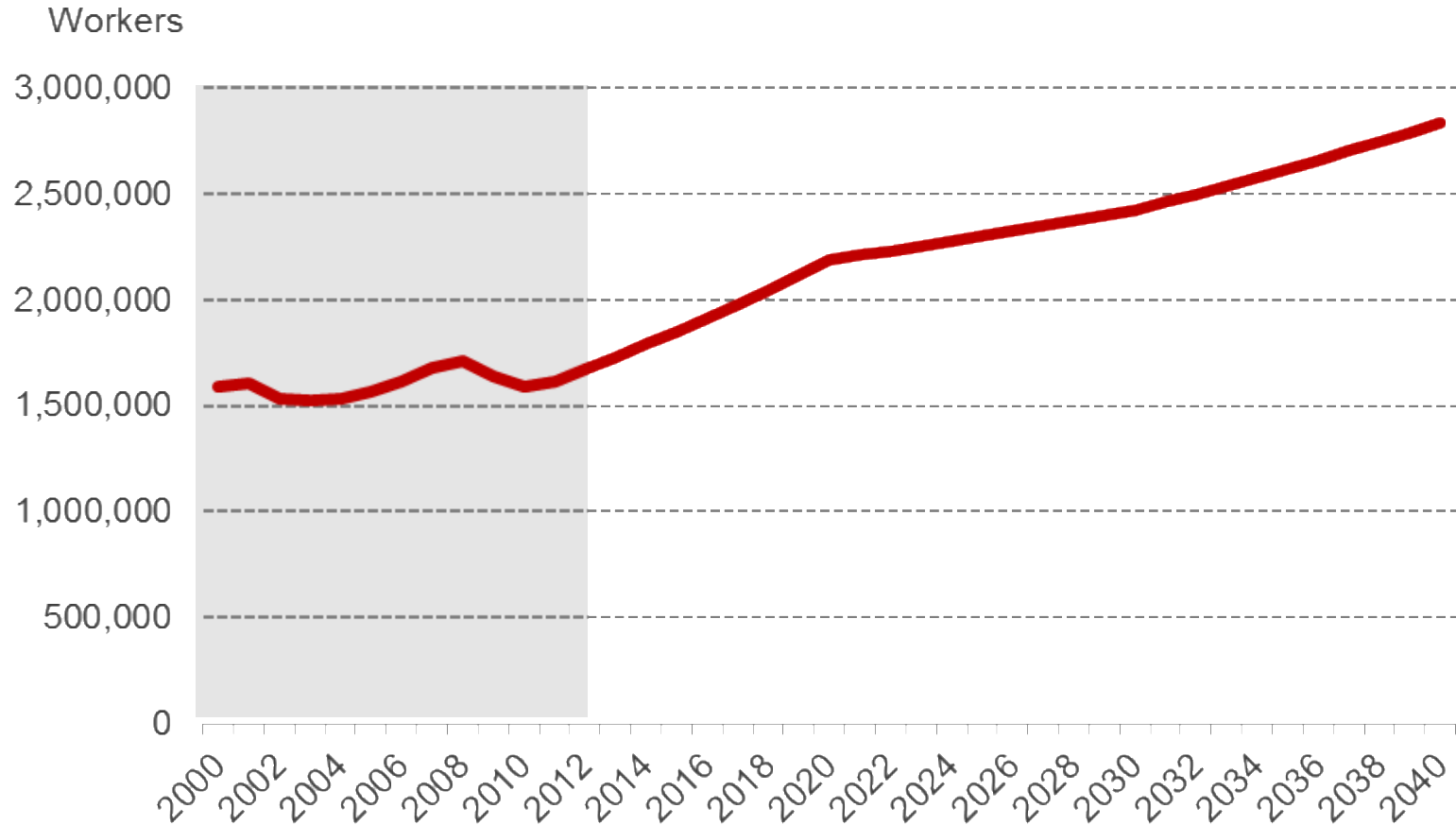
“It’s one thing to say that we support coming forward if somebody’s offending you. It’s another to really mean it. **Either on a union level or a company level, I don’t always think that they mean it.**” (White tradeswoman in Oregon)

“I think **management needs to be 100% behind having a system in place and then having a system where people can report.** Have real consequences for the bully no matter what level of management they are in. The company needs to take it really seriously.” (White tradesman in Oregon)

Workforce Diversity in the Construction Trades

- What are the trends in recruitment and retention, particularly for women and people of color, in the construction trades in Washington and Oregon?
- What challenges do tradespeople, particularly women and people of color, experience in Washington and Oregon?
- What policies and programs for increasing diversity in the construction workforce have been utilized in Washington and Oregon?
- Why should stakeholders support increasing diversity in the construction workforce and promote respectful workplaces?

Observed and Projected Growth in Employment in Construction and Resources Sector in Washington's King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties (2000-2040)



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2013.

Source: Community Attributes. 2014. *City of Seattle Construction Industry Labor Market Assessment*. Available at: https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/FAS/PurchasingAndContracting/Labor/CAI_Study2014.pdf

A Diverse Workforce Increases Productivity

Research suggests that diverse working groups can be more effective and productive than homogenous groups. A review of this research in *Scientific American* concludes:

“This is how diversity works: by promoting hard work and creativity; by encouraging the consideration of alternatives even before any interpersonal interaction takes place... we need diversity—in teams, organizations and society as a whole—if we are to change, grow and innovate.” (Phillips 2014)

Respectful Workplaces Increase Productivity

Aggression on job sites reduces productivity. When marginalized workers are hazed, not allowed to work, or are only allowed to do low-skill work, they are not being as productive as they could be.

“I spent days and weeks scrubbing penises off the wall. I was only allowed to use tools that had penises drawn on them... It was just constant harassment.” (white female apprentice in Oregon)

“You were sweeping the floors, taking out the garbage, you know, **doing the scut work when you’re a talented journey-level worker.**” (retired female electrician in Washington)

Curtis, Hannah and Noah Seixas, PhD. 2016. “Addressing the Health and Safety Needs of Washington Women in the Trades” Available at http://deohs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/SHEWT_Phase_I_Final_Report.pdf

Wilkinson, Lindsey and Maura Kelly. 2016. (Still) Building A More Diverse Workforce in the Highway Trades: 2016 Evaluation of the ODOT/BOLI Highway Construction Workforce Development Program. Available at: <http://www.pdx.edu/sociology/maura-kelly> c

Respectful Workplaces Increase Safety

A recent study found that for all workers, the odds of being injured at work in the past year were significantly associated with experiencing high levels of **overcompensation, gender discrimination, bullying, and financial hardship (Curtis and Seixas 2016).**

“The heartbreak about onsite job accidents is someone who’s new to the trade that was withheld the training and information from the journey-level workers around them. And while this happens to a lot of new people it specifically and oftentimes uniquely happens to women and minorities in the trades. **They are not told all the safety concerns of their trade, or how to do something safely, but left out to fend for themselves because there is a group of people who don’t think they should be there.**” (Retired electrician in Washington)

Curtis, Hannah and Noah Seixas, PhD. 2016. “Addressing the Health and Safety Needs of Washington Women in the Trades” Available at http://deohs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/SHEWT_Phase_I_Final_Report.pdf

Respectful Workplaces Promote Retention; Aggression on Job Sites Increases Turnover

“There was a guy who thought I should not be in the program who **belittled me in front of others who made me quit the job site.**”

(white male apprentice in Oregon)

“[I left my apprenticeship because] I was the only female mechanic and **I was constantly sexually harassed and discriminated against.**” (white female apprentice in Oregon)

“[I left my apprenticeship because I was] **tired of people talking down to me. When you are an apprentice, they treat you like shit.** No matter how much history you have, you will never be treated as an equal.” (Latino apprentice in Oregon)

Discrimination and failure to require respectful workplaces can result in lawsuits

- In 2015, the EEOC alone recovered \$164.5 million for workers alleging harassment (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016)
- Examples of lawsuits in the construction industry:
 - “In May 2009, an Illinois construction company agreed to pay \$630,000 to settle a class action race discrimination suit, alleging that it **laid off Black employees after they had worked for the company for short periods of time, but retained White employees for long-term employment.**”
 - “In March 2014, Olympia Construction, Inc. paid \$100,000 jointly to three former employees [who experienced] **racial slurs and intimidation.**”

Change in Construction Culture is Possible!

- There was a fundamental change in construction culture around issues of **safety**. Similarly, we expect that **reducing workplace aggression** will also have positive outcomes for the industry, including increased productivity, retention, and safety.

“I think this generation [is] a lot more accepting of everything, it just amazes me how they’re just so easygoing.” (White male union staff member in Oregon)

“I believe it is changing... It’s one step at a time. There is definitely some kind of [need for] organization or something mandated within the state... Something that when people referred to it, whether it is OSHA, it is something important in the trades.” (Tradesman of color in Oregon)

How to Build Diversity in the Construction Trades

- Continue efforts to recruit diverse workers into apprenticeships.
- Strengthen and expand pre-apprenticeship programs and retention services.
- Financial and non-financial supportive services to improve retention.
- Implement programs to create respectful workplaces.
- Improve quality of on-the-job training during apprenticeship.
- Ensure equal opportunities for employment during apprenticeship.
- Implement hiring policies and programs to promote hiring of marginalized workers.

Building Diversity in the Construction Trades

Maura Kelly, PhD
Department of Sociology
Portland State University

Diversity in the
>> Construction Trades Summit



THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2017

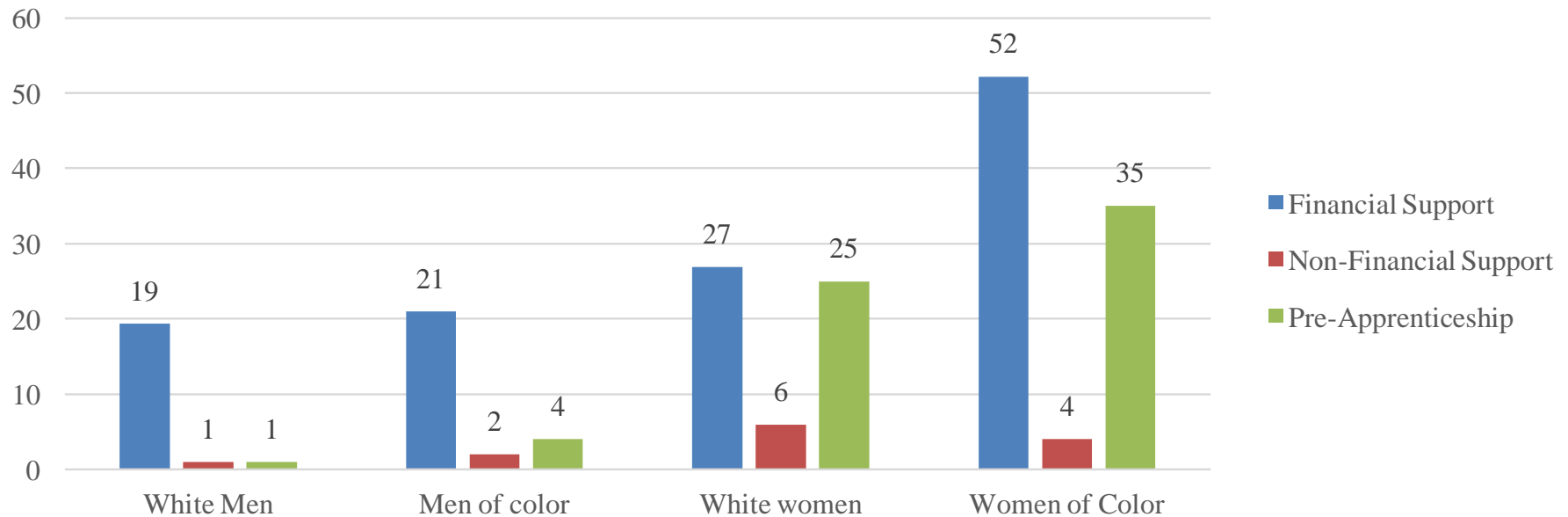
This presentation is available at www.pdx.edu/sociology/maura-kelly

Supplementary slides

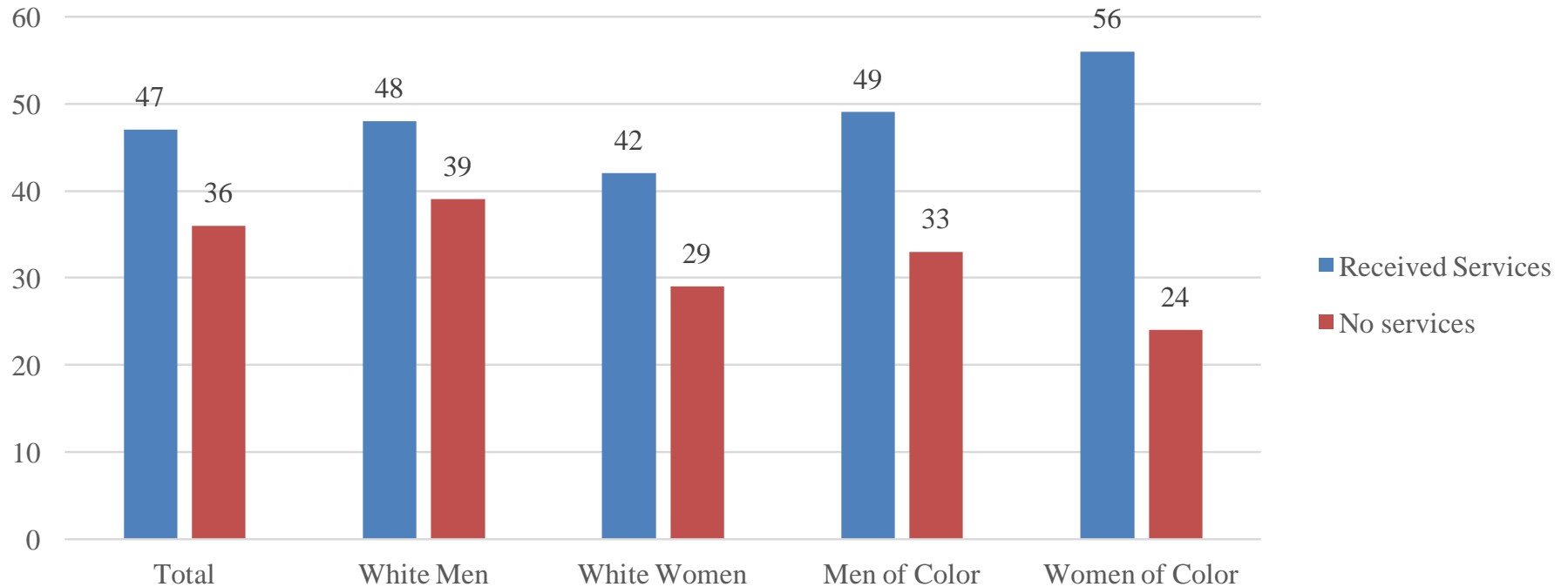
	Survey Respondents	All 2014/15
N	523	6319
Currently enrolled/completed/left without completing	68%/18%/14%	68%/14%/15%
Male/Female	79%/21%	93%/7%
White/People of Color	45%/55%	79%/21%
Average age entering into apprenticeship	29	28
Living with spouse or partner	70%	N/A
At least one child under 18	48%	N/A
At least one child under 5	31%	N/A
Modal household income category	\$30,000 - \$39,999	N/A
Received supportive services	19%	8%
Attended a pre-apprenticeship program	7%	2%

Source: OAS and survey data

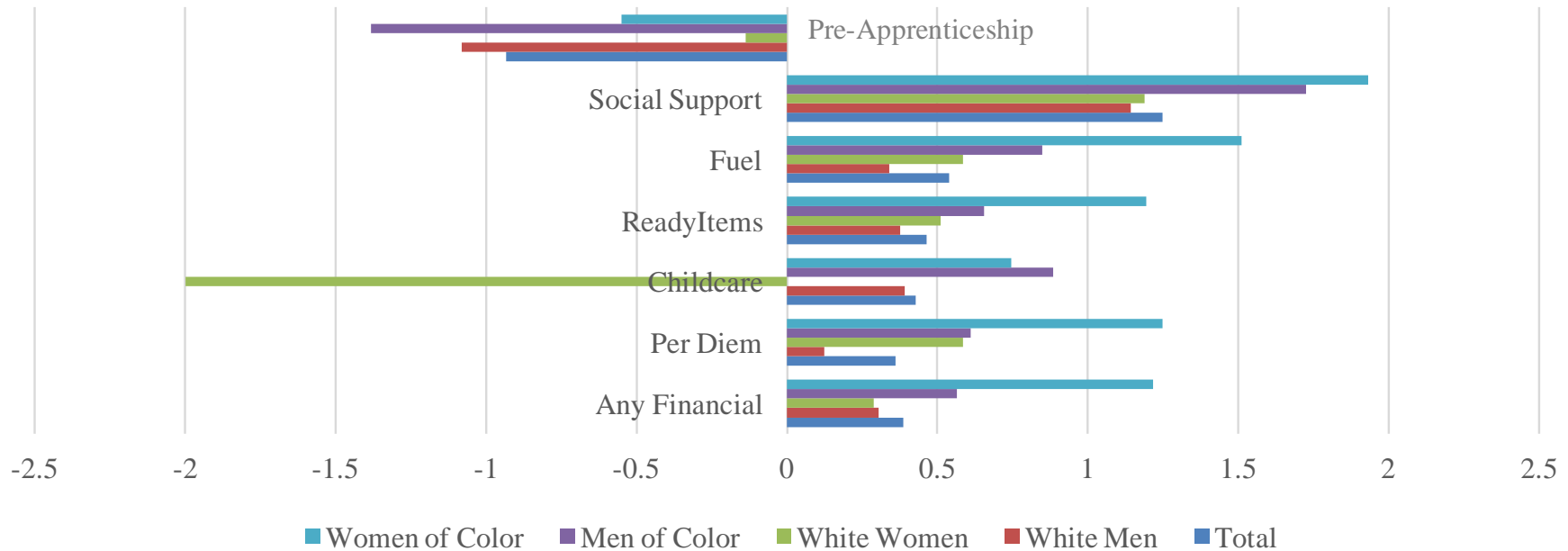
Percentage of Apprentices in Eligible Trades active in 2014-2015 Served by BOLI/ODOT Services, by Race and Gender



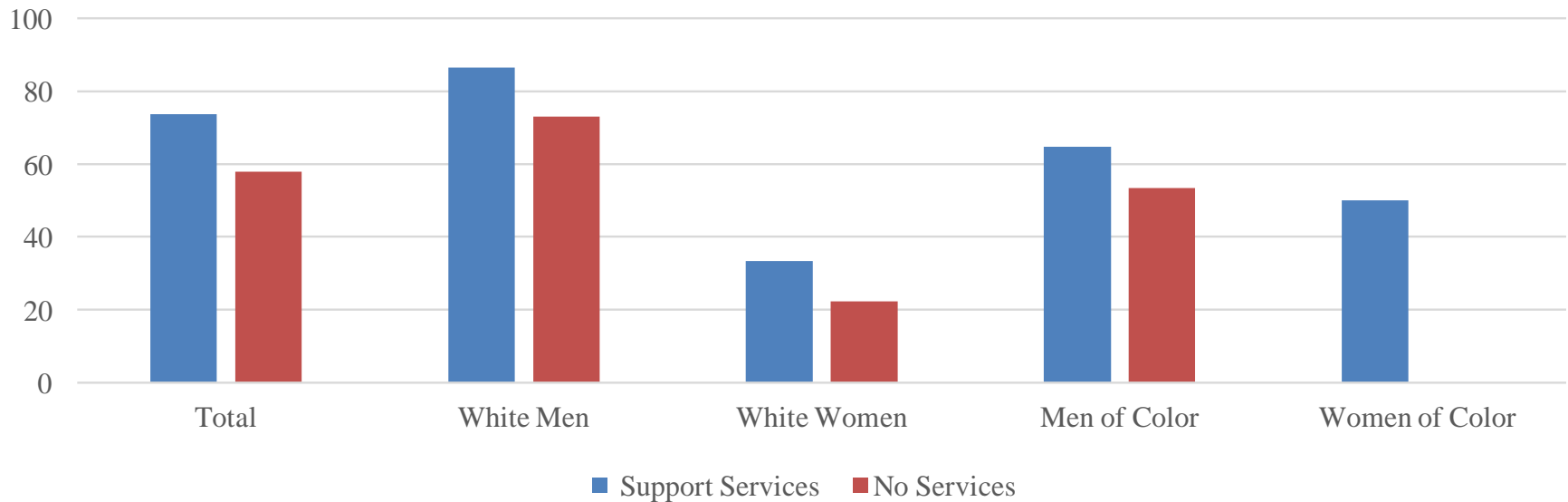
Completion Rates Among Apprentices in Eligible Trades, by Receipt of BOLI/ODOT Supportive Services, by Race and Gender (2005-2015)



Change in Log Odds of Completing an Apprenticeship when Receiving BOLI/ODOT Supportive Services, by Race and Gender (2005-2015)



Percentage of Apprentices in Eligible Trades Working as Journey Workers or in Construction after Apprenticeship, by Receipt of Services, by Race and Gender (2014-2015)



PSU Construction Trades Research Projects

Completed data collection

- 2012 interviews, mail survey, OAS data
- 2015 focus groups with stakeholder in the construction trades
- 2014 phone survey and OAS data
- 2016 phone survey and OAS data

Ongoing data collection

- Evaluation of pre-apprenticeship programs (Oregon Tradeswomen Inc and Constructing Hope) (2016-2017)
- Evaluation of Green Dot bystander intervention program for the construction trades in Oregon (2016-2018)
- Evaluation of Green Dot for the construction trades in Seattle (2017-2018)

Final reports available at: www.pdx.edu/sociology/maura-kelly